



Equitable Briefing Initiative

Achieving equitable representation of Victorian women barristers in commercial litigation

Charter of Commitment (Law firms)

We, the signatories to this Charter, commit to the following actions every year over the next three year period (2016- 2019). Our goal is to collectively achieve gender equality in our commercial briefing practices:

1. We are committed to **Gender Equitable Briefing**. We commit to one of the following aspirational targets:
 - a. Our **target** is to brief in approximately equal proportion to the number of CommBar members who are women (which at 30 June 2015 is 28%), in both the number of briefs and value of briefs; or
 - b. Our **target** is to brief in approximately equal proportion to the number of Commbar Junior Counsel members that are women (which at 15 September 2015 is 30%) and the number of CommBar Senior Counsel that are women (which at 15 September 2015 is 16%), in both the number of briefs and value of briefs.
2. We commit to developing, updating and promoting an **Equitable Briefing Policy** and circulating this annually to all lawyers at our organisation. This will include supporting staff to attend relevant training sessions to improve briefing practices.
3. We undertake to ensure that, in preparing **commercial briefing shortlists** for clients and in seeking recommendations for shortlists, suitably qualified and experienced women barristers are included. If we are provided with a list without a woman barrister nominated, we will ask, "if not, why not", to determine the justification.
4. We will take proactive steps to **identify new women commercial barristers** with skills and expertise in the areas in which we regularly brief work. This may be women who are new to the bar, or women barristers practising in a particular area who have not previously been on the firm's radar.
5. We commit to **collect relevant data** that captures the gender and experience level of the person briefed, and the monetary value of briefing. The data captured may be expanded in the future to collect other relevant information.

6. We undertake to **confidentially report our briefing data** to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission every 6 months, with the expectation that the Commission will report back to us individually and publically in a de-identified manner. The first report will be provided to the Commission by 1 September 2016 and will capture data from [1 January 2016 – 30 June 2016].